

REMARKS

This Amendment is being filed in response to the Office Action dated March 25, 2008. Reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the amendments made above and the remarks to follow are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 3-14 remain in this application, where claim 2 has been canceled in its features included in independent claim 1.

By means of the present amendment, the current Abstract has been deleted and substituted with the enclosed New Abstract which better conforms to U.S. practice.

By means of the present amendment, claims 1 and 3-14 have been amended for non-statutory reasons, such as for better form including beginning the dependent claims with 'The' instead of 'A', changing "characterized in that" to --wherein--, and deleting reference numerals typically used in European practice that are known to not limit the scope of the claims. Such amendments to claims 1 and 3-14 were not made in order to address issues of patentability and Applicants respectfully reserve all rights under the Doctrine of Equivalents.

In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that the

information disclosure statement (IDS) filed March 10, 2005 fails to comply with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(1). This indication is not understood and Applicant requests clarification particularly in view of the indication that EP 0904717 has been considered, as noted on page 3 of the Office Action. If the IDS is deemed to fail to comply with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(1) because WO2204/023948 is not listed on form PTO/SB/08A, then it is respectfully pointed out that WO2204/023948 is the International publication of the present application and thus need not be listed on form PTO/SB/08A. Applicant respectfully requests further specificity as to why the IDS fails to comply with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(1).

In the Office Action, claims 1, 4, 6-8 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,610,132 (Martin). Claims 2-3 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Martin in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,405,637 (Cai). Further, claims 9-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Martin in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,793,933 (Weber). Claims 12-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Martin in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,009,792 (Kraan). It is

respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 3-14 are patentable Martin, Cai, Weber and Kraan for at least the following reasons.

On page 4 of the Office Action, in rejecting claim 2, rubber seal disc 94 of Cai, shown in FIG 2, are referred to that have elongate projections. Assuming, arguendo, that the Cai rubber seal disc 94 or the Cai filter support ridges 92 (also shown in FIG 2) are analogous to the support projections that have a cross-section that is elongate, as recited in independent claim 1, still the Cai rubber seal disc 94 or filter support ridges 92 has a largest width at the an outer end.

In stark contrast, the present invention as recited in independent claim 1, and similarly recited in independent claims 21 and 29-30, amongst other patentable elements recites (illustrative emphasis provided):

wherein said cross-section has a length in a radial direction with respect to said discharge opening and has a largest width located radially between a middle of said length in a radial direction with respect to said discharge opening and an outer end of said length.

These features are nowhere disclosed or suggest in Martin and Cai. Weber and Kraan are cited to allegedly show other features

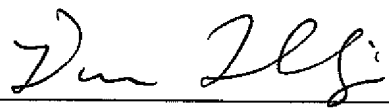
and do not remedy the deficiencies Martin and Cai.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 1 is allowable, and allowance thereof is respectfully requested. In addition, it is respectfully submitted that claims 3-13 should also be allowed at least based on their dependence from amended independent claim 1.

In addition, Applicant denies any statement, position or averment of the Examiner that is not specifically addressed by the foregoing argument and response. Any rejections and/or points of argument not addressed would appear to be moot in view of the presented remarks. However, the Applicant reserves the right to submit further arguments in support of the above stated position, should that become necessary. No arguments are waived and none of the Examiner's statements are conceded.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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